



## *Career Advice*

### HOW TO GET BACK INTO THE WORKPLACE AFTER AN EXTENDED ABSENCE

Re-entering the workforce after taking extended time off can be a daunting thought. There are a number of reasons why you might have been away from work such as raising a family, recovering from an illness or maybe you spent some time overseas.

Firstly you have to decide what you want to do, as you may want to assess your skills and upgrade them if necessary, especially on the IT side. Decide on whether full-time or part-time work would suit your current lifestyle better and whether you want to return to a familiar environment or explore a new field.

Once you have decided on what it is that you want to do, work out an action plan with how you intend on getting there. Start by comparing what you've got to offer an employer and identify any shortcomings in your skills, knowledge and experience that might hinder your chances of being employed in the position. Then look at ways to overcome the obstacles and start implementing corrective action. Ensure that your CV is up-to-date, that the layout is not confusing, it needs to be crisp and personalized to the work field that you want to enter into. Attitude plays a major role. You may need to take an entry-level position or feel that you are taking a step back in your career, to get the experience that you require, for your dream job or even to just re-enter the job market. Be open to considering contract or temporary opportunities, as these jobs will allow you to gain experience and may turn into permanent positions. Tell everyone that you know that you are looking for work. Tell them what you can do and the kind of job that you want. People can't help you if they don't know what type of skills you can offer an employer.

Apart from professional obstacles there might also be some personal hesitations that could slow down the process. If you have been out of the job market for a long time, prepare yourself for some changes. Talk to people that you know who are employed about their experiences, particularly people who have recently been job hunting. You may lack self-confidence or might be nervous about having to work in a team again. You might even struggle with the idea of someone giving you instructions. After having to answer only to yourself for so long. It's difficult to portray yourself confidently during an interview if you are worried. So prepare yourself mentally to have to answer questions that might highlight your shortcomings. Prospective employers might be hesitant to employ you as they could be worried that you might not last long back in the world of work after enjoying an extended period off. Use a staffing partner like a professional recruitment agency to help you through the transition period and guide you through the process and how to handle the obstacles you might face.

Lastly remember that it might take some time to find the right job or any job. If you've decided to return to work, don't sit around waiting for a job to come to you. Go out there and grab it with both hands. Stay positive and pro-active during this process, but always realistic in your expectations.